



TV OR NOT TV?

There are some very nifty mobile phones around this year, and the Nokia N92 is about as nifty as they get. Its screen delivers TV images as good as high-end VHS, and that's pretty good for something you can carry around wherever you go. Operators such as Orange and 3 are already offering TV services on their mobiles, and now Vodafone has done a deal with Sky to pump numerous channels on to its phones.

Zygote reckons the introduction of mobile TV to the mass market heralds the beginning of the end for BBC funding via the traditional TV licence. It is simple enough for TV detector vans to pull up outside specific households and zap them to see if a goggle-box is being used, but it is damn-near impossible to monitor people on the move and establish if they watch mobile TV.

The situation is complicated further by the BBC offering more and more material to download. In fact, TV downloads in the UK increased by 150 per cent last year. You do not have to shell out for a licence if you watch BBC copyright material on DVD, so why would you need to pay for a licence if you watch BBC programmes downloaded to hard disks or memory sticks?

The government has been planning for the collapse of the TV licence system for some time, and it will introduce a tax on eyeballs very soon. The mechanism is already in place. All the government has to do is add the current £126.50p licence fee to its Identity Tax, also known as biometric ID Cards, then privatise the BBC altogether.

POUND OF FLESH

Never is the phrase 'adding insult to injury' more appropriate than when premium rates are charged

ZYGOTE

There's something in Zygote's eye as he bids farewell to the TV licence – perhaps he has a tic from squinting at soaps on his mobile, or perhaps his retinas are being monitored by the government?

for emergency phone numbers, such as those issued by the government in the wake of last year's London bombings. Home Office minister Hazel Blears issued a trite statement afterwards, saying: "We will be working to determine whether 0870 numbers are the most appropriate way of providing Casualty Bureau access to the public."

Well, Ms Blears, they're damn well not. Emergency numbers should be free to call, but these cost between 7p and 40p a minute, and they are not only restricted to squeezing the pennies out of people who are sick with worry. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority promoted an 0870 number for the renewal of tax discs, and there are dozens of other public departments operating the scam.

Zygote recommends all readers to take advantage of the SayNoTo0870.com website, which is dedicated to stamping out this sort of legitimised extortion. It lists oodles of alternative cheap phone numbers for services, offices and businesses trying to entrap the public into phoning premium rate numbers. This is exactly the sort

of consumer battle for which the internet should be used.

By the time you read this, the Ofcom consultation deadline will have passed and the online campaign should have peaked. Zygote sincerely hopes a law has been enacted forcing premium-rate operators to greet all enquiries with the computerised message: "Hello, this call is costing you an extortionate rate because we are a bunch of shysters."

NAME AND SHAME

It's extremely annoying when to be fobbed off with the lame excuse that "it's a computer problem". But when the police misinterpret computer data, it is either a matter of ignorance or deliberate obfuscation, both of which are reprehensible.

Operation Ore has been one of the highest profile cases ever, with 7,200 names of suspected internet paedophiles supplied to British police forces by American colleagues. The original evidence centred around a Texas-based website called Landslide, whose home page was said to feature a pay-to-view button labelled 'Click Here for Child Porn'

from 1996 to 1999. In other words, everyone visiting the site would have seen it and understood it. There was huge publicity, especially when high-profile names appeared on the list of site visitors, and the newspapers filled acres of space naming and shaming. But an important fact was overlooked by legions of investigators month after month. The 'Click Here for Child Porn' button did not exist on the home page at all. It was, in fact, an advertisement embedded on a portal page, leading to another website.

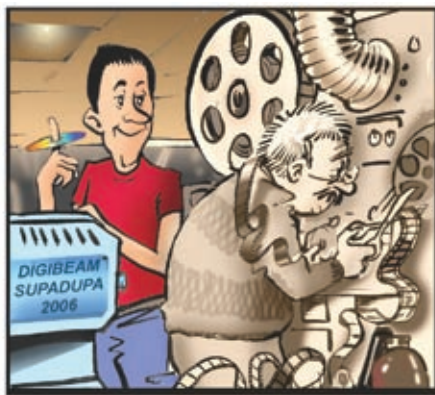
As the years of investigation rolled on, individual images became divorced from the pages and architecture of linked sites, which were closed down or went out of business, but data files of credit card transactions remained and were somehow linked to these vile images. Many accusations of downloading paedophilic material have resulted in prosecution, and rightly so, but many thousands of allegations may be groundless and based on tainted evidence. Meanwhile, investigations have led to 33 suicides, including the commander of British forces in Gibraltar, Commodore David White.

Most disturbing of all is that most police investigators had never seen the original website, only a doctored image from a website link. Zygote has seen the original Landslide home page as rebuilt by a British forensic computer consultant working for the National Crime Squad. It shows an image of a mountain, with no links to child porn sites whatsoever. Now original testimonies are unravelling as being false, but it is too late for the many accused whose names were leaked to publications such as *The Sun* and who chose to kill themselves instead of trying to clear their names. Shame on all those responsible. **CS**

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217: DIGITAL PROJECTORS



Independent film makers once found it difficult to get a wide theatrical release of their art because of the cost of 35mm prints



Now, with more cinemas being equipped with digital projectors, copying and distributing movies is much cheaper and easier



Which is great news for a new generation of independent film makers